

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY USSR (Far East)

REPORT

SUBJECT Soviet Sea Rescue Operations

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This is UNEVALUATED Information

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operations:

Soviet sea rescue

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1. Past incidents involving Soviet ships in distress show the following faults in Soviet sea rescue operations.
 - a. The Soviets do not have a Maritime Safety Board.
 - b. The responsibility of sea rescue operations rests with individual shipping bureau chiefs.
 - c. Shipping bureau chiefs request the participation of naval vessels and aircraft through the fleet commander.
 - d. Very little cooperation among naval vessels, coast and border guard unit, and fishing fleet exists.
2. The following incidents serve as reference for determining the aforementioned faults.
 - a. KUZNETSTROY Disaster

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The KUZNETSTROY was a 3,000-ton class transport plying between Vladivostok and Kamchatka. This ship ran aground off Onnekotan-To (N 49-20, E 154-40) at 1420 hours, 22 February. No rescue ships arrived at the disaster scene before the ship sank at 2115 hours, 24 February. At 1345 hours, 23 February, the Far Eastern Shipping Bureau ordered the transport URARUMASHI (phonetic) (TN. Presumably URALMASH) and the ARUMABUIRU (phonetic) (TN. Presumably ALMAVIR) to the rescue. The former was 130 miles from the scene of the disaster and the latter was 180 miles away. Heavy seas prevented both ships from reaching the stricken vessel before she went down. There were three strange things about this incident: (1) why naval vessels from Petropavlovsk (N 53-01, E 158-39) and Kashiwabara (Severo-Kurilsk) (N 50-42, E 156-13) did not go to the rescue; (2) why persons from Onnekotan-To, supposedly inhabited and garrisoned by a border guard unit, did not go to the rescue; and (3) the SOS signal must have been heard by other naval and border guard units.

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b. BASUKUNCHAKU (phonetic) (TN. Presumably BASKUNCHAK) Disaster

The BASKUNCHAK belonged to the Sakhalin Shipping Bureau. This vessel encountered a severe storm on the evening of 20 February while en route to Tetyukhe (N 44-22, E 134-51) from Kholmsk (N 47-03, E 142-03). The Sakhalin Shipping Bureau directed ships in the North Japan Sea to search for the vessel, particularly the PARANA and ATOPORU (phonetic) (TN. Presumably ATOPOL).¹ Aircraft also took part in the search but there was no trace of the stricken vessel. No naval vessels took part in the search.

c. KAMUCHADARU (phonetic) (TN. Presumably KAMCHADAL) Disaster

On 25 November of last year the KAMCHADAL (2,598 tons) ran aground near the mouth of the Kukhtui River (N 59-23, E 143-18). It is believed that the ship hit a sand bar. Admiral Panteleyev, commander-in-chief of the Pacific Fleet, ordered naval vessels in the area to assist with the salvage operation.

Comment: Possibly OTCR.

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